Achieving long-term results
Streamlining operations strengthens the City and community

The City of Bloomington has always been focused on how to streamline operations while continuing to offer the community quality services at an affordable price. In both expanding and contracting economic times, the City looks to improve the cost-effectiveness of its services and does not staff or provide services beyond what it can sustain through a normal downturn. In this way, we choose to shape the future rather than react to a changing environment.

One of the City's goals is to improve its service to residents and businesses – not just for the short term – but in a manner that will sustain our community long into the future. The following are some examples of how the City is achieving this goal.

Snowplow operator Jamie Van Thuyne helps keep city roads safe.

Tracking Parks and Recreation

"City staff does a wonderful job and it shows – from Public Works to Parks and Recreation programs, I could go on and on."

Resident Jolene Bergerson

Parks and Recreation schedules athletic activities for more than **5,000 individuals per year**. To keep track of these activities they use a software application. The program features an online registration system that enables users to register for activities, view availability of recreation facilities, and get the latest schedules and standings for the adult sports leagues, all from their home computers.

"Our customers and staff love the online system," Parks and Recreation Assistant Manager Greg Boatman said. "It has helped streamline our services." **Nearly 1,000 households** used the online system in 2009, **saving the City more than $8,000** in costs.

Since its inception, **more than 60 percent of registrations** for youth programs have been completed online. **Website keywords: Online programs.**
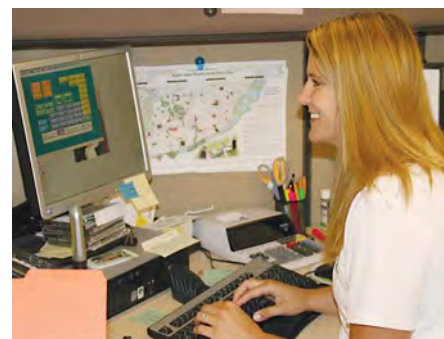
Recreation Supervisor Kari Hemp demonstrates how easy it is to use Parks and Recreation's online registration system.

Battling snow with computers

"The snowplowing crews do such excellent work. In a time of limited budgets, their hard work is much appreciated."

Resident Tony Massaros

A Christmas Eve blizzard in 2009 piled more than a foot of snow onto Bloomington streets, but Public Works crews were prepared, thanks in part to new automated vehicle location (AVL) units installed in their trucks. The units contain global positioning systems (GPS) that monitor not only where a truck is located, but how much snow has been plowed. The GPS also shows how much salt and sand are being disseminated. The practice promotes sustainability because it reduces overuse of materials and helps prevent over-salting that could pollute nearby waterways.

Soon residents may be able to go online to see when snowplows will visit their streets. The AVL units with GPS won't just be used in the winter, but will be used year-round to streamline street sweeping and mowing operations.

Expanding our virtual community

We're expanding our virtual community to provide online services that are more sustainable and convenient by meeting people where they want to be, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

E-Tools, that allow you to find answers any time of the day, include:
- *Ask the City* – Find answers and submit questions online.
- *E-Subscribe* – Receive City news events via e-mail or on your cell phone.
- *Online program services* – Sign up for activities online. *See article above.*
- *Webcasts* – View City meetings from the comfort of your own home.
- *Interactive maps* – Search our geographic information system

"Beautiful job on your website – it's easy to find everything and very well done."
Luann Schmaus, Hennepin County
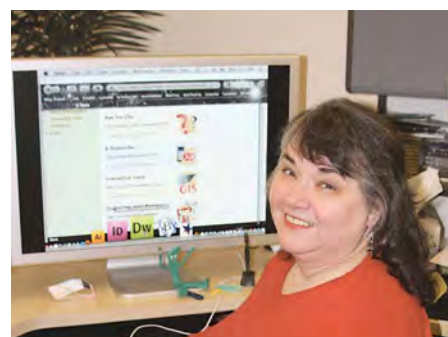
Webmaster Jan Norbeck ensures the City's website is user-friendly.

for construction projects, zoning information or crime stats.

The numbers show people are using these services. To date, **more than 3,500 subscribers have signed up with E-Subscribe**. In 2009, *Ask the City* served more than 5,300 individuals. In addition, the City of Bloomington's website traffic soared this past year with a **record 474,160 unique visitors**. Additional traffic was generated by these new tools, but the numbers also show that more and more people go online to get their information. The City's goal is to be there to meet them. **Website keyword: E-tools.**

Revamping Human Services' transportation

"I'm so grateful that we have a transportation option in Bloomington. Without it, I would probably just stay at home."

Transportation program participant

Human Services provides older adults and persons with disabilities transportation for personal trips, such as to and from Creekside Community Center, medical appointments, grocery shopping and employment. The transportation program ensures that older adults and people with disabilities remain active and healthy members of the community.

In 2009, Human Services revamped its transportation program to focus on a small number of older adults who do not qualify for existing transportation services outside of the city. By helping residents determine their eligibility for other transportation programs, the City was able to sharpen the focus of its transportation program services, **saving $40,890** in 2009. It was more cost-effective to provide transportation service to qualifying adults through the use of City cars and accessible taxis.

Human Services' driver Bob Anderson helps transport visitors to and from Creekside Community Center.

Website keywords: Transportation Services.

Breaking the language barrier

City employees like **Office Support Specialist Sharon Williams** communicate easily with non-English speaking customers using an automated interpretation service. The service provides quick, over-the-phone translation of 179 languages.

Joleen ~ *Mail Coordinator* ~ *9 years*

"Synergy: The action of the City as a whole."

"Ability to please before, during and after an interaction with a customer."
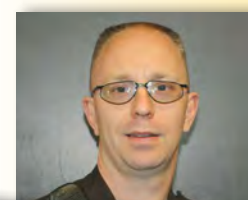
Jacob ~ *Animal Control Officer* ~ *10 years*